

Vodafone's converged network improves collaboration within Cambridge County Council and delivers £1.2 million cost savings

Fast facts

Customer

Cambridgeshire County Council

Web site

cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Number of employees

5,000+

Country or region

United Kingdom

Industry

Public Sector

Customer profile

Cambridgeshire County Council

undertakes a wide range of activities on behalf of citizens. These range from education, social services, fire service, libraries, trading standards and transport and highways, among others.

Challenge

The Council wanted a truly unified communications solution, enabling its employees to effectively communicate, share ideas and interact together from anywhere at any time. It also wanted to minimise the amount of travelling in carrying out County Council business and reduce its 'carbon footprint'

Solution

Vodafone provided an Avaya Unified Communications solution running in two data centres at the Council's headquarters within Cambridge and one other site in Huntingdon. Avaya was chosen for its resilience, openness and expansion capability, allowing the Council to add products from various suppliers without being locked into Avaya-only solutions.

Benefits

- Empowered, flexible and responsive workforce
- Lower carbon footprint
- Reduced administration costs of £1.2m
- Improved network access and reliability

Cambridgeshire County Council wanted to extend its flexible working practices program 'Workwise' throughout the organisation, transforming the working environment and enabling staff involved in front line services to access 'always on', easy to use, rapid data and voice communications from any location. The Council's objective has been to develop an empowered and responsive workforce by embedding flexible working arrangements, helping employees improve their quality of life, while at same time offering improved delivery of services to a population of over 560,000 citizens.

Ultimately the Council wanted to make communications between multiple regional presences more efficient and flexible so that staff productivity increased and communication costs reduced.

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"Our vision is that staff work flexibly, balancing work life pressures and the needs of the community – satisfying these and their own requirements."

"The Council will benefit from a truly unified communications solution, providing over 5,000 government employees with a platform to effectively communicate, share and interact together from anywhere at any time, enabling new forms of flexible working and significantly improving the quality of public services offered."

Alan Shields,
Technical Architect,
Cambridgeshire
County Council

Challenge

Cambridgeshire County Council wanted to benefit from a truly unified communications solution, providing over 5,000 employees with a platform to effectively communicate, share and interact together from anywhere, at any time, enabling new forms of flexible working and significantly improving the quality of public services offered.

As part of its 'WorkWise' Project, the Council intended to support flexible working practices, while saving money for front-line services through improved staff productivity and reduced operating costs.

Climate change is a special priority for the County Council and tackling the causes, as well as preparing for the impact of climate change is an important element of the Council's operational strategy. By providing employees with the flexible working practices, enabled by a converged communications strategy, the Council wanted to minimise the amount of travelling involved in carrying out County Council business and reduce its 'carbon footprint'.

Technology evaluation

The Council evaluated the technological options required to support 'WorkWise' before deciding what partner to work with. It had no VoIP experience but knew it wanted a robust, resilient platform that was not based on proprietary technologies so that costs associated with service disruptions or platform expansion could be minimised.

Partner selection

The County Council tendered through the OGC which negotiates best value on behalf of local authorities. Having already worked with Vodafone Unified Communications Group during the technology appraisal stage, the Council chose Vodafone to design, implement and support its selected technologies. It was impressed with Vodafone's level of product knowledge, its professional services and the support it provided during the technology evaluation process.

Solution

To meet the Council's requirements Vodafone provided an Avaya Unified Communications solution – the Communication Manager and IP telephony software – running in two data centres at the Council's headquarters within Cambridge and one other site in Huntingdon. Avaya was chosen for its resilience, openness and expansion capability, allowing the Council to add products

from various suppliers without being locked into Avaya-only solutions.

Dimensions of the implementation

Together with Vodafone, the Council implemented the Cambridgeshire Community Network (CCN), an IP network that spans Council and District Council locations across Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire, amounting to around 450 locations.

The first phase of the solution was configured to support 1,001 users but will scale to deliver applications to over 3,500 users over the next three years. Ultimately there are likely to be more than 5000 users of the network.

Software-based phones

The Council is currently using Avaya one-X IP Phones but in the future these will be replaced with a roll out of Avaya's software-based telephone, the 'one-X Portal'. This allows staff to place and receive phone calls from any desktop or laptop PC with Internet access, making it an ideal application for employees on the move or working remotely.

Benefits

Vodafone empowered a public sector agency to do more with its budget by implementing a complete communications solution that supported mobile voice and data, while at the same time realising savings of more than 20 per cent (£1.2m) in operational costs over a three-year period.

Freedom and efficiency

The unified and converged communications network enables staff to make better and more flexible use of accommodation resources and is helping the Council move to a 7-to-10 desk ratio as an average across the authority. Also, employees can take advantage of number portability by logging into any handset from any location, punching in their personal ID and then being reachable via their normal phone number. And since the network can be accessed via a range of technologies, whether private or public cable broadband, WiFi, GPS and SMS, employees are further freed from being tethered to one particular location to access information and messages. By using Avaya's Modular Messaging application, employees can now answer voice messages and email from one Microsoft Exchange inbox, saving time and enabling them to be more responsive.



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New kinds of collaboration

In addition, the converged network allows for new applications that increase collaboration among Council staff. For instance Avaya's Modular Messaging application means employees can now answer voice messages and email from one Microsoft Exchange inbox. The solution also includes Avaya's Meeting Exchange which allows the council to book conferences via a web-based browser. These meetings can be recorded and played back later.

Asset Management/Total Cost of Ownership

Outside of the 20 per cent reduction in operational costs the Council expects to benefit from many other soft savings such as: mobiles being provided only where necessary, a reduced number of staff directories, improved network reliability.

Additional cash savings were realised by reducing the cost of supporting staff moves and new starts, reducing mileage and expenses, consolidated and cheaper mobile and fixed-line costs, cheaper network operations management, less staff travel and expenses and a reduction in the number of ISDN and private network connections.

Productivity

Staff productivity has improved due to less time required travelling to meetings, elimination of the need for mobile workers having to return to base to pick up messages, increased project collaboration and document sharing, as well as improved network access via a smaller range of communications devices.

For more information, visit vodafone.co.uk/business



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